

Hoodline

'Painting Is The Pattern': Artist Zio Ziegler Previews New Gallery Show

By Stephen Jackson, March 5, 2015.



Courtesy of Stephen Jackson / Hoodline

This Friday, Jules Maeght Gallery will debut its second exhibition, "Painting is the Pattern", featuring French street artist Pierre Roy-Camille and the Bay Area's own Zio Ziegler.

You might be familiar with Ziegler's work from the myriad murals he's executed around the city, and Roy-Camille brings with him an equal level of street-art notoriety from his home country across the Atlantic. For both, however, this show marks their entry into a new echelon of the art world, showing at a gallery that was recently home to works by artists such as Vassily Kandinsky and Juan Miro.

New to the neighborhood from Paris, France, Maeght and his wife Amelie are excited to host these rising stars. "This show is very important to me because in a way they both have the same paths, they have both started with street art, and have become famous because of street art," Jules told us. "But at some point they both learned to do things more for galleries or museums. I think they are exactly at this point, where everything is changing."

We caught up with hometown hero Zio Ziegler while he was hanging the show to get a first glimpse at some of his new work and talk with about putting on a San Francisco show after traveling the globe for various exhibitions over the past few years.

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The name of this show is entitled "Painting is the Pattern." How do you think your work embodies this theme?

"I've always strayed from working in series format because I think it constrains random inspiration, and the more that one can engage with a random influx of ideas, or a book picked up, or a conversation, the more one can improvise. That's the power of being an artist, to being able to pivot at any given moment, and if I'm supposed to deliver a series of paintings that are thematically strung together, then I don't have the room to be able to bend and twist."

So although you don't like to work thematically, how did you choose what you put into this show?

"This is a body of work from the last month, everything was made in the last four weeks. Right now I've been obsessed with referencing art history in such a way where you pay homage, but you're able to comment and build this independent dialogue on top of that, almost using art history as a sort of shorthand, in order to cue a new train of thought."

"The one with the raft is actually my homage to "The Raft of the Medusa". With all the pieces you sort of have these nods to philosophers and painters and literature that I'm inspired by right now and I wanted to show the transparent etymology of thought."

Your painting has recently seen an explosion of color. What are your thoughts on this development?

"Color has this multitude of tensions you can offer whereas black and white is binary, so if I want the opportunity to offer something more subtle, more ineffable, I think that color offers more solutions than black and white, although black and white is closer to a universal language."

Where do you think fashion, technology and art intersect?

"In San Francisco...[laughs] ... hmm, great question. Well, I'll have to talk from personal experience. A lot of what I do is aimed to make my work more accessible. I never wanted to be a painter, simply because of the accessibility. I didn't want to go to a museum as a child, to have to go see an exhibition, I wanted to go and see the art on the street, without the pretension of a space like that, without the daunting feeling of having to walk into a white cube and have everyone staring at you because you don't know about it."

"I felt more comfortable looking at graffiti, I felt more comfortable looking at skateboard decks and art in different mediums, so a lot of what I aim to do today is make the pattern work or imagery I use in my paintings also acceptable in clothing I design here and there. The role of technology I'd say is both that it's incredibly efficient in the distribution of these concepts, but I also think that social media will have a long-term negative effect and influence on painting."

What's the number one source of inspiration behind your painting?

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"Literature, hands down. I mean it's very odd to have an inspiration for most artists that's not visual, but for me, it's not what's seen but what's imagined in these books and often they're the ones that provide the conceptual context and the emotional context for what I'm painting. The secondary inspiration would be that of primitive art, Aegean, Etruscan, Grecian, you know, red-ground Greek faces. Very simple yet complex narratives solidified into very simple visual solutions.

"That's the most powerful thing to me and I want to work in that same format, where I want to build my own allegory. I want to allow the viewer to go ahead and acknowledge their role in these narratives, or the role of these paintings in their own lives as well. It's sort of like a Rorschach test, cuing them to access different involuntary memories, prompting that access and then allowing for a Freudian transference with the image itself, but I think that's what literature is what does that for me."

In your opinion, what is on the horizon for the San Francisco art scene?

"I think the art scene, in many ways, has an opportunity to blossom and for this to become the center of the art world. I say that simply in an economic way. The art world now is so globalized and it's taking place all over, but I think if we have the influence of "Medici" money here now, hopefully the culture is not long in coming. I think that anywhere where there's hyper efficiency and innovation, there needs to be culture to back life and give life substance. I'm very hopeful that there's going to be a new level of patronage and a new level of awareness to public beauty."

You've had exhibits in galleries all over the world. How does it feel have a show back in San Francisco?

"I feel extraordinarily lucky for all of it. I always try to research as much about places where I go before I go there, and often its like 'this is everything that inspired me from the place where I grew up.' You know, like Barry McGee and Mike Giant and Jeremy Fish, all of that whole movement of Beautiful Losers and the skateboard culture, art culture, like making things, exploring in the woods, that's the crux of what I'm all about. I wanted to make the best work that I've ever made for this show."

Zio and Pierre's show will run from March 6th until May 9th, so there's plenty of time to stop in to 149 Gough St. and see their work in person. The show opens this Friday, March 6th, with an opening taking place from 6pm-8pm.